

**STATEMENT BY HON. MOSES WETANG'ULA, MINISTER FOR FOREIGN
AFFAIRS AT THE 8TH SESSION OF IOR-ARC COUNCIL OF MINISTERS
MEETING, TEHRAN, ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN**

REPUBLIC OF KENYA

**MR. CHAIRMAN, HONORABLE MINISTERS, DISTINGUISHED
DELEGATES, EXCELLENCIES, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,**

ON BEHALF OF THE KENYA DELEGATION I WISH TO TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO CONGRATULATE THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE IOR-ARC COUNCIL OF MINISTERS FOR THE EFFECTIVE FACILITATION OF THESE DELIBARATIONS. LET ME COMMEND OUR HOST, THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN, FOR THE HOSPITALITY ACCORDED US AND THE EXCELLENT FACILITIES ARRANGED FOR OUR MEETING. THE GESTURE OF THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN IS TESTIMONY OF COMMITMENT TO THE SUCCESS OF OUR ORGANIZATION. ON BEHALF OF MY DELEGATION, LET ME ASSURE YOU OF OUR SUPPORT TO ENSURE A SUCCESSFUL SESSION.

MR. CHAIRMAN,

IT IS NOW MORE THEN A DECADE SINCE THE BIRTH OF OUR ORGANIZATION. THE OBJECTIVES FOR WHICH THIS ORGANIZATION WAS FORMED ARE AS VALID AS THEY WERE IN THE 1990S. OUR LONG HISTORY OF CONTACTS AND SHARED RESOURCES CONTINUE TO BIND US TOGETHER IN OUR ENDEAVOURS TO ATTAIN THE DEVELOPMENT OF OUR COUNTRIES. IN ADDITION, DEVELOPMENTS IN THE GLOBAL SCENE MAKE IT IMPERATIVE FOR US TO STRENGTHEN OUR COOPERATION TO BE ABLE TO MEET THE CHALLENGES AND TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE OPPORTUNITIES IN THE GLOBAL ARENA. IN THIS REGARD, WE SHOULD TAKE THE ADVANTAGE OF THIS SESSION TO PROPEL THE ORGANIZATION TO GREATER HEIGHTS AND ALSO EXPLORE WAYS IN WHICH MEMBER COUNTRIES CAN REAP MORE BENEFIT FROM OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE IN OUR COUNTRIES AND THE REGION IN GENERAL. A NUMBER OF COUNTRIES WITHIN THE RIM ARE FACED WITH NUMEROUS ECONOMIC CHALLENGES. THERE IS THEREFORE NEED TO CONSOLIDATE EFFORTS TO TACKLE THESE CHALLENGES.

THE CURRENT TREND IN THE WORLD'S ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL ORDER NECESSITATES COUNTRIES WITH COMMON VALUES, ASPIRATIONS AND UNDERSTANDING TO STRATEGICALLY APPROACH ISSUES COLLECTIVELY IN ORDER TO DERIVE MAXIMUM BENEFITS. THIS IS MORE SO IN THE FACE OF DEVELOPMENTS SUCH AS THE EVER CHALLANGING GLOBALISATION AND THE EXISTING GLOBAL ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL ARCHITECTURE. IT IS ON THIS BASIS THAT WE STRONGLY BELIEVE THE INDIAN OCEAN RIM ASSOCIATION FOR REGIONAL COOPERATION CAN BE USED AS A PLATFORM ON WHICH WE THE COUNTRIES WASHED BY THE INDIAN OCEAN WATERS CAN MAXIMIZE POTENTIAL BENEFITS. IT IS THEREFORE A CHALLENGE TO ALL OF US TO ENSURE THAT THROUGH OUR INDIVIDUAL AND COLLECTIVE EFFORTS, THE IDEALS OF REGIONAL COOPERATION ARE OUR DRIVING FORCE IN OUR ENDEAVOUR TO SUSTAINABLY EXPLOIT THE POTENTIAL WITHIN THE INDIAN OCEAN AND OUR RESPECTIVE COUNTRIES.

MORE THAN TEN YEARS SINCE THE INCEPTION OF THIS ORGANISATION, WE HAVE NOT MADE MUCH PROGRESS TOWARDS OUR OBJECTIVES. IN THE PAST OUR ORGANISATION HAS MOSTLY DWELT ON INFORMATION GATHERING. WE SHOULD THEREFORE MOVE

FAST AND ENTER THE IMPLEMENTATION PHASE. WE WELCOME THE DECISION OF THE 7TH COUNCIL MINISTERS DIRECTING THE SECRETARIAT TO DEVELOP A 3-4 YEAR PLAN OF ACTION FOR THE IOR-ARC. THE PROPOSED PLAN OF ACTION WILL BE USEFUL IN GUIDING THE WORK OF THE SECRETARIAT AS WELL AS THE MEMBER STATES. THE PROPOSED PLAN SHOULD FOCUS ON CREATING AN ENABLING ENVIRONMENT FOR COOPERATION IN THE REGION RATHER THAN ENGAGING IN SPECIFIC PROJECTS. CONSULTATIONS AND PREPARATION OF THE PLAN SHOULD BE MORE COORDINATED TO ENSURE THAT ALL MEMBER STATES VIEWS ARE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT.

MR. CHAIRMAN

IN RECALLING DECISIONS REACHED DURING A MEETING HELD IN COLOMBO, THE COUNCIL AGREED TO IMPLEMENT AN INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS AIMED AT STRENGTHENING THE IOR-ARC SECRETARIAT. IT WAS AGREED THAT A NUMBER OF INSTITUTIONAL ADJUSTMENTS BE PUT IN PLACE TO ENSURE THE SUCCESS OF IOR-ARC. THE SECRETARIAT SHOULD BE COMPOSED OF SKILLFUL, EXPERIENCED AND DYNAMIC PROFESSIONALS COMPETITIVELY SOURCED FROM AMONG MEMBER STATES. KENYA IS READY TO WORK WITH OTHER MEMBER STATES TO MAKE THIS A REALITY. IN THIS REGARD WE HAVE LOOKED AT A PAPER DEVELOPED BY THE DELEGATION OF AUSTRALIA WITH VERY USEFUL RECOMMENDATIONS THERE-IN. I AM SURE THIS COUNCIL WILL FIND FAVOUR IN ADOPTING STRATEGIES AND PROPOSALS CONTAINED IN THE PAPER. HOWEVER, IT IS IMPORTANT TO NOTE THAT IN SPITE OF SOME DIFFICULTIES THE CURRENT SECRETARIAT HAS DONE A COMMENDABLE JOB . WE SALUTE THE OUT-GOING EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR MR . SAMSUDEEN HOWEVER, THERE ARE VARYING CHALLENGES INCLUDING MOVING THIS ORGANIZATION TOWARDS PROGRAMME AND RESULT ORIENTED ACTIVITIES.

WE COMMEND THE GOOD WORK BEING UNDERTAKEN BY THE WORKING GROUP OF HEADS OF MISSION BASED IN PRETORIA. KENYA PROPOSES THAT THE WORKING GROUP BE RECOGNIZED AS AN INTERSESSIONAL COMMITTEE TO FOLLOW UP IMPLEMENTATION OF DECISIONS MADE BY THE ORGANIZATION.

THE WORKING GROUP SHOULD ALSO BE ENTRUSTED WITH THE DAY TO DAY ADMINISTRATIVE AND FINANCIAL DECISION MAKING FOR THE ORGANIZATION.

MR. CHAIRMAN,

THE INDIAN OCEAN REGION HAS TREMENDOUS POTENTIAL FOR TRADE AMONGST OUR COUNTRIES. WE NEED TO EXPLOIT THESE OPPORTUNITIES THROUGH REMOVAL OF BARRIERS TO TRADE AND EMPOWERING OUR BUSINESS PEOPLE. THE INITIATIVE TO ESTABLISH A PREFERENTIAL TRADE AREA IS A STEP IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION. HOWEVER IT IS THE VIEW OF MY DELEGATION THAT A STUDY SHOULD BE DONE FOCUSING ON FEASIBILITY OF THE PTA AND POTENTIAL CONFLICT THAT MAY ARISE DUE MEMBERSHIP IN OTHER FREE TRADE ARRANGEMENTS. IT IS TRUE THAT MOST COUNTRIES WHO ARE MEMBERS OF IOR-ARC BELONG TO ECONOMIC GROUPS WHO ARE FAST PROGRESSING OR ARE ALREADY CUSTOMS UNIONS. WHAT WE NEED TO BE CONSCIOUS OF IS THAT, THOUGH MEMBERSHIP TO CUSTOMS OR FREE TRADE GROUPINGS IS ITSELF GOOD , THIS ORGANIZATION STILL HAS A LOT OF SPACE AND PROMISING POTENTIAL FOR FURTHER TRADE AND RESOURCE EXPLOITATION OPPORTUNITIES. OUR TRADE SHOULD BE FACILITATED TO MOVE FREELY AND WITHOUT VISA RESTRICTIONS AMONG MEMBER STATES.

MR. CHAIRMAN,

THE REALIZATION OF THE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE ASSOCIATION CAN BE

BETTER ACHIEVED THROUGH INVOLVEMENT OF THE CRITICAL PLAYERS IN ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES. WE SHOULD THEREFORE STRIVE TO ATTRACT THE PARTICIPATION OF THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY IN OUR INDIVIDUAL COUNTRIES IN IOR MEETINGS. IN ADDITION, PRIVATE SECTOR INVESTMENTS ARE AN IMPORTANT CATALYST FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT. OUR ORGANIZATION SHOULD COME UP WITH INITIATIVES TO ATTRACT INVESTMENTS BOTH WITHIN AND OUTSIDE INDIAN OCEAN RIM TO INVEST IN OUR COUNTRIES AND TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE LARGE MARKET. THE VAST MARINE RESOURCES AND THE TOURISM INDUSTRY ARE AREAS WORTH CONSIDERING. OUR TECHNICAL TEAMS ON TRADE AND INVESTMENTS SHOULD WORK HARDER TOWARDS THIS END.

MR. CHAIRMAN,

THE COUNTRIES OF THE INDIAN OCEAN RIM ARE AT DIFFERENT LEVELS OF DEVELOPMENT. SOME OF OUR MEMBERS HAVE MADE GREAT STRIDES IN DEVELOPMENT AND TECHNOLOGY. AS COUNTRIES SHARING A SIMILAR VISION WE SHOULD BE ABLE TO MUTUALLY SHARE THESE ADVANCES FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE REGION. WE SHOULD EXPLORE WAYS OF SHARING TECHNOLOGY THROUGH TRANSFER ON FAVOURABLE TERMS AND COOPERATION IN RESEARCH AS WELL AS EXCHANGE OF BEST PRACTICES.

COOPERATION IN EDUCATION IS ONE AREA WHERE WE COULD REAP MORE BENEFITS. WE SHOULD BE ABLE TO UTILIZE THE LARGE CAPACITY WE HAVE IN EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN THE REGION. THIS CAN BE DONE THROUGH COOPERATION AMONG OUR INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER LEARNING AND EXCHANGE PROGRAMMES. HOWEVER, FOR THE EXCHANGE PROGRAMME TO BE FEASIBLE THERE IS URGENT NEED FOR THE INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER LEARNING TO COME UP WITH PROPOSALS ON A WORKABLE CREDIT TRANSFER POLICY, WHICH WILL ENSURE GREATER FLEXIBILITY IN LEARNING AND QUALIFICATION PROCESSES. IT WOULD BE OUR JOY IF THIS COUNCIL WOULD ENCOURAGE MEMBER COUNTRIES TO OFFER LEARNING AND TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES TO STUDENTS BY AGREEING TO CHARGE LOCAL OR DOMESTIC RATES. THIS WOULD RAPIDLY SATISFY OUR SHARED DESIRE FOR EFFECTIVE TECHNOLOGY AND SKILLS TRANSFER. WE THEREFORE URGE THE ACADEMIC GROUP TO CONTINUE TO EXPLORE WAYS OF MAKING THIS POSSIBLE.

MR. CHAIRMAN, EXCELLENCIES, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

THE SUCCESS OF IOR-ARC AS A REGIONAL ORGANISATION WILL DEPEND ON THE DEGREE OF ENTHUSIASM WITH WHICH WE THE MEMBER COUNTRIES WILL COOPERATE IN ACHIVING THE TARGETS OF THE ORGANISATION. WE FURTHER REITERATE THE NEED FOR ENHANCED COHESION AMONG MEMBER COUNTRIES FOR THE SAKE OF A STRONG AND FORMIDABLE ASSOCIATION IN THE CURRENT DYNAMIC GLOBAL ARENA.

THANK YOU.